

*Rec'd 2-18-70*

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Director-Comptroller

SUBJECT : CIA Archives

1. This memorandum contains a recommendation for approval; such recommendation is contained in paragraph 11.

2. Records of Federal Agencies are the property of the United States Government and their unauthorized destruction is a criminal act. Authorization to destroy records must be obtained from the Congress with the recommendation of the Archivist of the United States. The authorization is obtained by submitting to the Archivist lists which identify general categories of record material we seek approval to destroy. The Agency Records Officer serves as the channel and Security reviews the requests. The Archivist has waived his authority to review individual documents which we request authority to destroy.

3. The Archivist also has authority to determine what documents must be preserved permanently as part of the Archives of the United States. He does not exercise this authority, however, until Agencies transfer records to his custody for permanent retention or request disposal authority. We have not needed to seek special dispensation from this authority. Our scheduled records disposals and requested authorizations do not conflict with the National Archives requirements. In the case of Presidential Libraries we arranged to identify, segregate, and retain sensitive documents appropriate for eventual transfer to each of the Presidential Libraries. Eventually each Presidential Library becomes an appendage of the Archives of the United States under the administrative and operational control of the Archivist.

4. We have an obligation to provide a system for the protection and preservation of our valuable documents and it is equally as intense as our obligation to provide our own audit of the use of federal funds. We should be equally attentive to the discharge of both obligations. Our efforts to conduct a purge of Agency records holdings during the past 18 months has brought into focus the need to provide greater protection for our permanent records. This fact was intensified last year when we were required to give special attention and make a special effort to identify documents appropriate for inclusion in the Lyndon B. Johnson Library. Recent inquiries from the British and American military officials and citizens about the OSS Archives have sharpened the recognition of need to insure that we have a program which will stand the test of outside inquiry or investigation in the event that should ever occur.

5. The Agency has neither an archives program nor policy at this time. About ten or twelve years ago the Agency Records Administration Officer and the Chief of the Records Center on their own initiative began selecting for an archival collection one record copy of each Agency publication. Later arrangements were made with a few Offices to segregate some case files and documents from the inactive records. This screening continues to be done as time is available in addition to other duties at the Records Center. Only this minor type of document selection is possible without benefit of Agency policy guidance and without the authority to make the necessary judgments. Since the inactive office records from which other archival materials will have to be selected are considered to be the property of the components which have made the deposits the Records Center personnel are severely limited in their efforts to extend even this makeshift archival program. This is especially apparent when components or projects are disestablished or reorganized and the disposition of valuable policy and accomplishment documentation is left to inexperienced junior officers. Senior officers about to retire are similarly without archival concern and Records Officers are not consulted or able to intrude.

6. At the beginning of February 1970 we had 12,749 cubic feet of material already segregated as Archival and Presidential Library material. These are the one record copy of each Agency publication. Very few office records or policy papers are in that collection. Outside the Archives collection there are 4,258 cubic feet of OSS material and 10,362 cubic feet of inactive office records scheduled for permanent retention which require screening and appraisal to select for transfer to the Archives collection those documents which are truly archival. There are another 1,796 cubic feet of OSS materials retained in the Headquarters Building to serve the day-to-day operations of DDP/RID. Thus far we know of some 16,416 cubic feet of material scheduled for permanent retention which must be screened and appraised in addition to the 12,749 cubic feet already screened and set aside as archival. This is a total of 29,165 cubic feet of materials which must be considered as the initial part of the Agency Archives.

7. Archives are historical and legal documents which must be kept permanently. They are different from inactive office records scheduled for a temporary period of retention in a storage area outside the office. Archive records are historically and scholastically significant while inactive records are operationally and administratively useful. Archives are the permanent documentation of the Agency while inactive records are temporary extensions of Headquarters file space. Both permanent and temporary records are sent to the Records Center for a scheduled period of time until the operating needs of the originating office are met. Eventually the permanent records should be transferred to the Archives and the temporary files destroyed. Screening and appraisal of today's

intermixed inactive records for selection of archival material should be conducted by, or under the supervision of, qualified professional Archivists. It should not be left to office administrators and operational personnel primarily concerned with today's problems. Even the Agency Historians, Records Officers, and Records Center Personnel have only a current interest in Agency records. Everyone appreciates the value of primary source documentation but the interpretation requires Archivists because others do not recognize the value beyond their own immediate or probable needs. The basic premise of permanent archival retention is in conflict with the basic premise of records disposition. The objective of one is to retain and the objective of the other is to dispose. A definition of archives and description of an Archivist are attached at Tab A.

8. Experience has shown that the screening process results in the retention of about two-thirds of the material the Archives accessions and screens. The remainder is destroyed as duplicates or non-archival. The longer we delay the accessioning and screening process the more difficult it will become because the volume of inactive records transferred to the Records Center scheduled for permanent retention continues to grow. Experience gained during the purge suggests that it requires about three to five man-hours to review one cubic foot of records. We already have enough material to keep several people fully occupied for many years. We must have an authoritative archival program operating under clear policy guidance staffed by competent professional Archivists. The sooner we acquire Archives experience with our permanent records the faster we can revise and refine our records retention schedules and filing systems to tighten requirements nearer to the records creators and original custodians to eliminate duplication and reduce the volume in the offices and inactive storage centers.

9. I realize, of course, that under the current stringent personnel restrictions it will be extremely difficult to find the means by which resources can be allocated to this important program. If it were possible to staff such a function appropriately we should have a Senior and Deputy Archivist, plus one professional Archivist to represent each Directorate as well as the Office of the Director and clerical personnel to support them. In short, we should have a minimum of seven professional Archivists and positions for three clericals.

10. Eventually, we should have a storage facility separate from the Records Center to house the Agency archives. Archives require a higher quality of storage space than other record materials do, more like a library than a warehouse, with air conditioning, heat, and humidity controls. They should have contiguous space suitable for use by historians and scholars seeking to exploit them. Long-term building

plans for the Agency should include provision for archival storage. Meanwhile, the collection can continue to be accommodated in segregated space at the Records Center [ ] but the Records Management personnel should be relieved of the responsibility for their administration. To release the Records Center storage space it may be a reasonable alternative to consider installing the archival facility at [ ] but, because of the growing reference activity in this collection (4,300 services and 14,000 reproductions provided last year), it would not be reasonable to move the archives there until we are in a position to house and staff it adequately.

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11. It is recommended:

(a) That you approve the establishment of an Archives Program in the Agency and that responsibility for that program be assigned to the Chief, Historical Staff.

(b) That the Chief, Historical Staff and the Chief, Support Services Staff work together to develop policy and procedural statements to govern the Archives Program and its continuing interrelationship with the Agency Records Administration Program.

(c) That the Agency reprogram its resources over the shortest possible period of time to provide for the creation of a suitable staffing complement to support the archives program.

(d) That the long-term building plans for the Agency include specific provision for archival storage.

R. L. Bannerman  
Deputy Director  
for Support

Attachment

CONCURRENCE:

Howard M. Ehrmann  
Chief, Historical Staff

Date

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